

## TAASA Legislative Agenda | 87th Session

By popular vote, TAASA's membership has adopted the following priorities for the 87th Legislative Session.

### **Full Confidentiality Protections for Survivors | SB 295/HB 1374**

Sexual assault advocates currently do not have the same legal protections of Confidentiality that family violence advocates can offer to survivors. Survivors of sexual assault should be offered equal confidentiality protections when seeking services at a crisis center.

### **Trauma-Informed Investigations | HB 1172**

Survivors report that the process of engaging in the criminal justice system is often re-traumatizing and difficult. Victim experience in the criminal justice system can be improved in the following ways: a legal right to an advocate during law enforcement interviews, a statewide ban on requesting polygraphs from victims, and ensuring the right to a forensic exam for all adult survivors.

### **Strengthening Community Responses to Sexual Assault | SB 476**

Currently, less than 10% of rape victims in Texas report their assault to the police. Multidisciplinary response teams that include community advocates and sexual assault nurse examiners are shown to improve both health and judicial outcomes for victims. This would address a gap in Texas communities by requiring that county stakeholders come together to develop collaborative protocols for responding to the crime of sexual assault.

### **Updating the Language of Non-Consent**

**SB 945/HB 4135:** Texas should close a gap in the sexual assault penal code to address the use of professional deception as an illegal means to gain consent for sexual contact under the guise of medical or mental healthcare 'treatment'.

**SB 312/HB 376:** Texas should also clarify that persons in the custody of a peace officer cannot give consent to sexual contact. This priority would elevate that criminal sexual contact to address the power dynamics present.

### **Access to Healthcare for Survivors of Sexual Assault**

Survivors of sexual assault should have the ability to access the same level of preventative health-care and no matter where they choose to receive a medical forensic exam. Medications like HIV prophylaxis are particularly critical for survivor health and should be routinely accessible, regardless of exam location. Community based forensic exam programs are a national best practice in trauma informed and victim centered care. They are able to provide a level of privacy and attention without all of the enormous costs of a hospital visit. The legislature should clearly state that community based Forensic Exam Programs are eligible for the same medical reimbursements that are afforded to hospital-based programs.